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AUTHOR	Groff, Donald W.; Warlow, G. L.
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ABSTRACT

This study of an exchange camping program was conducted to evaluate the potential for developing understanding and appreciation between people of varying cultural backgrounds. The subjects were 31 English speaking Ontario campers and 30 French speaking Quebec campers ranging in age from 8 to 16. Attitude change was determined by administering a Lickert-type attitude scale at the start of the exchange period, half-way through it, and at its conclusion. The younger campers were more actively engaged in friendship-making the first week than the older campers, but the latter developed more permanent inter-cultural friendships gradually. (KG)

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CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS IN A SUMMER CAMP*

by

Donald W. Groff and G.L. Warlow.

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Department of Extension Education
Ontario Agricultural College
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario.

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Purpose and Objectives.

This study was begun with the purpose of "evaluating the potential of children's camping for the effective development of understanding and appreciation between people of varying cultural background; and to determine the factors inherent in the camping situation which are essential to such development."

Specifically we attempted to determine:

(1) which social (sub) grouping, integrated or segregated, offers the greatest potential.

(2) the effect of time (duration) spent in these (sub) groupings upon the development of understanding and appreciation between cultures.

(3) which age level best lends itself to that development.

(4) the effect of involvement by campers in planning their program activities upon that development.

Hypotheses.

Utilizing the concepts of attitude development and friendship-making as measures of developing understanding and appreciation between cultures, it was hypothesized that:

(1) Campers of two different cultural backgrounds make friends across the cultures more readily when integrated in their social living sub-groups, than when grouped homogeneously according to their cultures.

* This report is based on a study by Donald W. Groff, a graduate student in the Department of Extension Education, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph, from September 1966 to September 1967. The study was conducted under the guidance of Professor G.L. Warlow of the Department of Extension Education.

(2) Friendship-making across cultures in camp increases with the length of time (duration) spent in social relationships.

(3) Campers ten years old and younger make friends across cultures more readily than campers eleven years of age and older.

(4) The potential for friendship-making is greater in a camp setting in which campers are involved in the planning and determination of program activities.

(5) The potential for attitude development indicative of inter-cultural standing is greater in a camp setting in which campers are involved in the planning and determinations of program activities.

Assumptions.

Certain assumptions underlie these hypotheses. Working from the social distance studies of Professor Emory Bogardus and the more recent findings of Dr. Doris Allen, founder of the Children's International Summer Village movement, we have assumed:

(1) that barriers to intercultural understanding result from stereotyped and generalized concepts by members of one culture about the behaviour of members of a different culture.

(2) that friendship-making across cultures reduces the stereotyped, generalized concepts of behaviour by replacing them with concepts based on the activity of the specific "friends" representing that culture.

Dr. Allen's studies and the concept of."cultural relativism" led us to the assumption:

(3) that though cultural backgrounds are different in nature, the principles and problems governing the reduction of barriers between them are the same no matter which cultures are involved.

Knowledge from the field of child and developmental psychology, led to the assumption:

(4) that campers of the ages represented in the study are at stages of development of attitudes and socialization rather than at the more fixed positions of adults.

The validity of this assumption was further supported by Adorno and his associates in their classic study, "The Authoritarian Personality."

The Project Described

The study was conducted as part of a Centennial Campers Exchange Project conducted by Camp des Lutins (Quebec) and Camp Wabanaki (Ontario) during the 1967 summer seascn. Thirty-one English speaking Ontario campers exchanged places with thirty French speaking Quebec campers for a period of two weeks. In both the Quebec and Ontario camps, the exchange campers participated in the regular activities customary with their respective age groups and to the camps. Participants ranged in ages from eight to sixteen years with the majority falling within the eleven-year age bracket.

Within the Ontario camp (i.e. Wabanaki) the French Canadian campers were housed in two different ways. Some were assigned to groups which had English Canadian members, while others were housed in cabin units which included only their own French Canadian mates. In the latter case, an all English Canadian group was paired with each of the French groups as a partner. This design was replicated at two age levels within the camp community: those ten years of age and younger and those eleven years of age and older.

In the Quebec camp (i.e. des Lutins) no attempt was made to create any

special sub groupings. The Ontario campers were integrated into the camp population at their respective age levels.

SUB-GROUP DESIGN (English camp only)

Cabin group 'A' (French)	Cabin group 'B' (English)	Cabin group 'C' (French and English)	Cabin group 'D' (French and English)	Control group 'E' (English only)	Age level 11 - 14 years
Cabin group 'P' (French)	Cabin group 'Q' (English)	Cabin group 'R' (French and English)	Cabin group 'S' (French and English)	Control group 'T' (English only)	Age Level 9 - 10 years

INTER-CAMP DESIGN

English camp participation in program determination by campers	French camp limited participation by campers.

Three staff members accompanied each of the exchange delegations. They assumed regular leadership duties within the respective host camps. At Wabanaki, an effort was made to control for leader-bias by balancing French and English cabin leadership assignments (i.e. A French assistant

with an English leader and/or vice versa). Limited availability of leadership resources prevented complete and consistent utilization of this control feature.

Test Procedures.

Friendship-making at encounter and depth levels, and the development of attitudes conducive to other culture understanding, were the indicators being measured.

To assist with the measurement of friendship-making, typical camp activities were rated by a panel of judges, on a sliding 5 point scale, as to their respective potentials for friendship-making. These ratings when compiled and analyzed as to frequency of judges' scorings, provided a Friendship Potential Rating score for each activity. These F.P.R. scores were used at various points to weight the scorings of a number of the tests used.

A simple interest finder compiled from a sampling of the activities used in the Friendship Potential Rating list, was administered prior to the exchange period, to the total population of the Ontario camp including both the French and English exchange delegations. Scores thus obtained were used as measures of "readiness" for each participant.

Attitude change was determined by administering a Likert-type attitude scale to the total populations of both the camps at the start of the exchange period, half-way through it, and at its conclusion. Differentials between the scores earned at these three test points were computed and used as the measures of degree of attitude change during the intervals between the test points. It was these differentials that

were used to test hypothesis 5, dealing with the comparison between the two camp philosophies. These and the Readiness Scales (interest finders) were the only tests used in the Quebec camp.

The amount and degree of friendship-making, especially across cultural lines, were measured by means of sociometric friendship-choice tests which were incorporated into the normal camp routine in order to mask them for the respondents.

Social Relations Scales based on a version of the Bogardus Social Distance scales which had been adapted for use with children's groups were administered at the close of the exchange period. The results of these tests were used as reliability checks against other test results.

In addition to these prepared tests, staff members were asked to record their observations of interpersonal behaviour and to turn the records over to the researchers at regular intervals. The observation reports were subsequently analyzed as to the 'intent' implied in the behaviour, the degree to which it represented cross-cultural activity, and the potential of the observed behaviour in fostering cross-cultural friendships.

Scores were computed by weighting the activity being observed by its F.P.R. and giving the score a positive or negative value according to the direction (i.e. toward people, or away from people) which the observed behaviour implied.

Finally, at the conclusion of the exchange period, evaluations were conducted in two phases: group discussions conducted in each cabin unit; and a questionnaire completed by each participant.

Test forms and instructions were translated into the French Canadian

idiom for administration to the French Canadian participants.

Findings and Conclusions.

More friendships were made across cultural lines within the integrated cabin groups than within the segregated groups. The integrated sub-grouping pattern proved more conducive to the making of friends across cultures. The segregated sub-groupings permitted some degree of encounter between the cultural groups but did not seem to allow much opportunity for closing social distances.

It was very evident that leaders responsible for the inter-personal processes within cabin groups are able to be much more effective if they are bilingual.

A changeover day which occurred half-way through the exchange period proved a definite set-back to the friendship-making process, especially since it created a distinct numerical minority status for the French Canadian campers.

The influence of leader-bias was not adequately studied in this project but there was sufficient evidence to indicate that the influence has a considerable bearing upon the cross-cultural situation.

Although the changeover day complicated the duration experiment, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that the eleven year and older camper group required more time than their juniors to establish friendships.

This trend was also evident in the total situation since the Juniors tended to engage in friendship-making to a greater degree than the Seniors. This was especially true during the first week. It was noticeable however, that friendship-making by the Juniors was not sustained

nor did it remain at a consistent level during the entire period of the exchange, as contrasted with the activity of the Seniors which developed slowly but continued at a gradually increasing rate.

Differences between the program philosophies of the two participating camps became evident not in the opportunities for encountering representatives of other cultures, these were present equally in both camps, but in the opportunities for selecting and pursuing friendships from the other culture. Data indicated that the camp which involved the campers in determining their program offered greater opportunity for cross-cultural friendship-making. It was also apparent that opportunities to resolve inter-personal conflicts were greater in the latter camp situation. Leaders expressed the need for flexibility in the camp schedule in order to be able to deal with interpersonal relationship problems rather than being preoccupied with planning program activities for campers.

Readiness to make friends across cultures was definitely found to be a factor influencing the effectiveness of the exchange experience. However, more study of this variable is needed.

Problems arising from the test program could be avoided in future by reducing the number of tests, using fewer paper and pencil formats, and involving the staffs of the camps in preparing the tests.

Language-learning was slight and the process of cross-cultural friendship-making did not appear to be dependent upon it, especially for the Juniors. There was less opportunity for language-learning in the segregated cabin groups. Leaders tended to be overly-sensitive to the cultural differences when they were unable to communicate readily with their counterparts of the other culture.

There appeared to be a high correlation between the degree of expressed satisfaction with the exchange experience and the degree of child involvement in the initial decision to participate. The greatest satisfaction was expressed by those who had shared in the decision to participate.

From the data gathered, we were able to conclude that the exchange program was well received and that the potential of camps like des Lutins and Wabanaki is "sufficient for the effective development of understanding and appreciation between people of varying cultural background."

Recommendations.

As a result of conducting this study and the cross-cultural camper exchange project which accommodated it, a number of recommendations are presented here for future consideration.

Concerning the Exchange Project.

1. That no changeover of personnel, such as that which occurred in the project reported here be allowed to interrupt and disrupt the exchange period and relationships.
2. That leaders responsible for the inter-personal processes within the sub-groups be sufficiently bilingual to assure effective handling of conflict and decision-making situations which arise.
3. That participants receive some orientation and preparation for the exchange in order to assure a pre-disposition towards it.
4. That the operators of organized children's summer camp become aware of the potential of those camps for fostering improved cross-cultural understanding, and incorporate similar cross-cultural camper exchanges in their programs.

Concerning Further Research.

This study was designed as a pilot project with a view to indicating some future avenues for study. Hopefully, this piloting has been done and from it the following are recommended:

1. That experimental studies be undertaken for such variables as:
   (a) the influence of leader-bias in the cross-cultural camping situation.
   (b) the effect of time (duration) upon the development of understanding and appreciation between cultures (further to the work done in this study).
   (c) the effect of motivational factors upon the cross-cultural camping setting.
   (d) the influence of various program determination methods upon effective cross-cultural relationships. (This was only touched upon in this study).
2. That test programs be curtailed and limited in number, and that they be incorporated into the fabric of the camp routine as much as possible.
3. That efforts be made to refine the observation technique used in this study.
4. That future research projects focus on one or two variables in depth as opposed to the more exploratory nature of this study.
5. That a continuing program of research in the field of cross-cultural relationships within the camp setting be established, its findings to be correlated and continuously disseminated to the organized camping and social science fields.

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